

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 184901  
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S E C R E T STATE 184901

EXDIS MILITARY ADDEES PLEASE HANDLE AS SPECAT EXCLUSIVE

FOLLOWING REPEAT VIENTIANE 01080 ACTION SECSTATE INFO BANGKOK JULY 21

.

QUOTE S E C R E T VIENTIANE 1080

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-4

TAGS: SHUM PINS PROP LA VM

SUBJECT: ALLEGED VIETNAMESE CONTROL OF AND ATROCITIES AT NAM NGUM  
REEDUCATION CAMPS

1. A UNUSUALLY WELL INFORMED FRENCH SOURCE TELLS US  
THAT VIETNAMESE FORCES HAVE TAKEN ACTIVE CONTROL OF  
THE REHABILITATION CAMPS IN THE NAM NGUM RESERVOIR  
CONSISTING OF DONE THAO, DONE NANG AND OTHER ISLANDS  
WHICH THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS VISITED EARLIER THIS YEAR.

2. SOURCE SAID VIETNAMESE ELEMENTS PERFORMED ALMOST  
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ALL ADMINISTRATIVE AND GUARD DUTIES FOR THE PAST SIX  
TO TEN MONTHS, MAINTAINING A FACADE OF LAO ADMINISTRA-  
TION FOR THE BENEFIT OF VISITORS. HE SAID THAT LAO  
ADMINISTRATORS DID NOT SPEND THE NIGHT ON THE ISLANDS  
BUT RATHER ON THE MAINLAND, LEAVING THE CAMP COMPLETE-  
LY UNDER VIETNAMESE ARMY CONTROL AT NIGHT. HE SAID  
THE VIETNAMESE REGIME WAS A HARD ONE AND CITED THE

FOLLOWING ALLEGED EXECUTIONS:

A) DECEMBER 28,1976: A 19 YEAR OLD LAO WHO HAD TRIED TO ESCAPE SEVERAL TIMES WAS IMPALED BEFORE 800 INMATES OF THE CAMP WHO WERE OBLIGED TO WATCH DURING THE TWO HOURS IT TOOK HIM TO DIE BETWEEN 1700 AND 1900 HOURS.

B. NOVEMBER 24,1976: A 13 YEAR OLD BOY WHO HAD TRIED TO ESCAPE THREE TIMES WAS KILLED BY VIETNAMESE WHO ALMOST DECAPITATED HIM WITH A BURST FROM AN AK47 WEAPON. AT A SEMINAR THE NEXT DAY LAO-SPEAKING VIETNAMESE SAID THAT THE ELEMENTS OF THE POPULATION WHICH WERE NOT SALVAGEABLE SHOULD BE GOTTEN RID OF.

3. HE SAID EXECUTIONS WERE FREQUENT, RUNNING BETWEEN TWENTY AND THIRTY PER MONTH, INVOLVING THOSE WHO ATTEMPTED TO ESCAPE. PUNISHMENT OF SPREAD-EAGLING PEOPLE IN THE SUN WAS ALSO COMMON. THIS PUNISHMENT WAS PRACTICED IN SAM KHE PRISON, FOR EXAMPLE. THERE HAD BEEN CASES OF "NOYADES" OR GROUP DROWNINGS. DIFFICULT CASES (PEOPLE WHO REPEATEDLY TRIED TO ESCAPE) WERE INVITED TO SWIM FOR THE MAINLAND, BEING PROMISED THAT IF THEY MADE IT THEY WOULD BE FREE. MANY DROWNED. THE FEW WHO MADE IT ESCAPED AND JOINED THE "MEOS".

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4. SOURCE'S INFORMANT SAID IT WAS STRIKING THAT PRISONERS FORCED TO WATCH EXECUTIONS REMAINED COMPLETELY IMPASSIVE, SHOWING NO REACTION WHATEVER.

5. SURCE ESTIMATED THERE WERE 56 CONCENTRATION CAMPS IN LAOS CONTAINING BETWEEN 37,000 AND 38,000 LAO INMATES. HE SAID THEY COULD BE DIVIDED INTO THREE GENERAL CATEGORIES. THE FIRST, INCLUDING CAMPS AT PHONG SALLY AND LUANG NAM THA, WERE THE WORST. THEY WERE PRACTICALLY EXTERMINATION CAMPS AND ALL THEIR INMATES WOULD BE DEAD IN ABOUT TWO YEARS. THEY THERE WERE ORDINARY CONCENTRATION CAMPS LIKE THOSE AT VIENG SAY, WHICH WERE LESS HARSH. FINALLY, THERE WERE WORK CAMPS POPULATED BY SUCH PEOPLE AS FORMED ROYAL ARMY NCOS, WHICH WERE IN TURN LESS HARSH AND FROM WHICH THERE WERE SOME ESCAPES.

6. SOURCE ESTIMATED THERE WERE 40,000 VIETNAMESE IN LAOS WITH THE ASSIGNMENT OF IMPOSING THE NEW SYSTEM ON ABOUT THREE MILLION LAO. HE SAID THIS WAS A HIGHER PROPORTION OF CADRES ENGAGED IN THIS SORT OF WORK

RELATIVE TO THE TOTAL POPULATION THAN WAS THE CASE IN SOUTHERN VIETNAM. HE THOUGHT THEREFORE THAT SOME EARLIER SPECULATION TO THE EFFECT THAT THE REVOLUTION WOULD BE SOFTER IN LAOS THAN IN VIETNAM WOULD TURN OUT TO BE INACCURATE.

7. COMMENT: A UNITED NATIONS OFFICIAL QUOTED A FRENCH DOCTOR MAY 30 AS SAYING THAT THE DOCTOR HAD TOLD HIM THAT HE HAD RECEIVED FIRST HAND REPORTS OF BRUTAL INCIDENTS AT DONE THAO, DONE NANG, OFFERING AS AN EXAMPLE REPORTS THAT PRISONERS CAUGHT TRYING TO ESCAPE WERE IMPALED AS WARNINGS TO OTHER PRISONERS. (IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THE FRENCH DOCTOR WAS THE SOURCE OF REPORT PARA 2.)

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8. RECOMMENDATION: THAT DEPARTMENT REPEAT THIS MESSAGE TO CINCPAC, CIA, DIA. CORCORAN UNQUOTE CHRISTOPHER

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